

"Three In One"

or

"The Magic Trio"

What I Know About Breeding Reds

Mrs. E. W. Mahood



My Method of Line Breeding Reds

Harold Tompkins



Judging Rhode Island Reds

W. H. Card and J. C. Johnston

*Rhode Island Red Club
of America*

What I Know About Breeding Reds

By MRS. E. W. MAHOOD,
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WHEN it comes to choosing birds for the breeding pen, the first necessary step is to discard all unhealthy specimens. The most valuable breeding birds are birds with plenty of vitality for birds with low vitality are likely to be lacking in every quality which we require in a chicken, namely, color, the ability to grow quickly, to produce a high percentage of fertile eggs, to resist disease and to produce color and vitality in the chicks. Next we must discard all birds not up to a certain standard of size and type. We want birds with the length and breadth of body and length of keel bone which are important signs of the ability to lay many eggs or to produce birds with this ability. It is true that many splendid layers are not long in back but if good layers have not great length of body they must have great depth and the type which we who are breeders of Reds believe combines the greatest utility with the greatest beauty is the long broad back with good depth of body and the long keel bone which are typical of the ideal Rhode Island Red.

Our next step is to select our best colored birds and this is a more difficult problem. While this article is on mating and breeding and not on exhibition or judging, it is really

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necessary to know something about judging and exhibiting Reds if one is to breed them successfully. Therefore let us talk a little about the color of an exhibition Red. We have all heard a great deal said about the ideal shade of red and even in the best show rooms we hear exhibitors say about the judge "He likes dark birds" or "He does not like dark birds." For my part I have never yet seen or heard of a hot contest in Reds where first prize was given to a bird because he just suited the judge in shade or color. There are too many other matters to take into consideration. The judge who is accused of liking very dark birds has usually been compelled to give the honors to dark birds because they are more even in surface color or richer in undercolor than the others. While the judge who is accused of not liking dark birds has probably been compelled to throw out a dark bird because he was not even in color or because he was smutty or lacked in brilliancy or for some reason in which color bore no part. In other words, **evenness and brilliancy of surface color and depth and soundness of undercolor are all more important than having a particular shade of red.** This of course is applicable only within certain limits, as dark buff or light bay is not red and neither is brown or chocolate. Birds of these shades never receive consideration in strong competition under a competent judge. There is not much danger of breeders favoring a light bird for the light red bird is seldom even in color but there is a danger of favoring a brown or chocolate bird and this we must guard against. A brown bird may be used in the breeding pen sometimes but our ideal of the bird we are striving to produce must be red, not brown. That is, our aim must be to breed red birds and not

brown birds, though just as the painter may use brown to help produce a certain shade of red, we may find it useful occasionally to use a brown bird in our breeding pen.

The only way to approach the color problem is to remember that color must continually be built up or toned down for so far no breeder has been able to fix any certain shade of color in his flock. Let us try to make this plainer. We will say that Mr. Brown has made up a mating which produces good, dark, rich red birds among which are a few outstanding birds of exhibition quality. Now it chances that the females of this mating are a little darker than the male bird and darker than the majority of the cockerels and pullets which they produce. So Mr. Brown says, "It is the color of these pullets and their father which I wish to fix in my stock so I will pick out the best of the pullets with this beautiful exhibition color and I will mate them to their father, who has the same beautiful shade of red." This he does and what is the result? A very few of the offspring may be of the same shade of red as their father but the majority of them are lighter. This is the law in breeding Reds. The tendency is for the color to grow lighter with each generation and for that reason we have not so far been able to get a fixed color in Rhode Island Reds. As I said before, we must always either be building our color up or toning it down. Now Mr. Brown should have picked out the hens which had produced best in his mating and some of the best of the daughters of these hens, those that were nearest like their mothers and mated these back to the cock bird.

By Mr. Brown's experience you will see

that birds which are not really exhibition birds will often make the best breeding birds, but do not think that it necessarily follows that an exhibition bird will not make a good breeding bird. On the contrary, the exhibition bird will make a good breeding bird provided he has two qualities not demanded in exhibition birds but very necessary in breeding birds. These two qualities are good ancestors and the power to reproduce his own traits.

However, the exhibition bird which is as near the top scale of color or as light as he can be and still have exhibition color must be mated very differently from the exhibition bird which is at the other end of the scale of red color, or as dark as he can be and still have exhibition color. The former must be mated with the idea of building up the color or the chicks resulting from the mating will be lighter than their father and hence of no value either for breeding or exhibition purposes. Therefore this bird must be mated with birds of a slightly darker shade than his own or else with birds showing a little excess color or more black than is required by the Standard. This use of excess color has been much discussed but my own experience and the experience so far of all successful Rhode Island Red breeders with whom I have talked has been that the introduction of excess color is necessary in order to keep a good red color in Rhode Island Reds.

So much for the bird which borders on the light. Now the bird at the other end of the exhibition scale, the bird which is too dark, must also be carefully mated. If this bird is not overloaded in black points, that is if he has not more black in different sections than required by the Standard, he will

probably produce well when mated with females as near his own shade of red as possible, provided these females are not also overloaded with black, for every bit of black introduced into a mating tends to produce a darker shade of red and this of course is the reason that the Standard calls for black points. If this bird is much stronger in black points than the Standard calls for, it will be better to choose for his mates females a shade lighter and the proper section to consider when choosing mates for him is his breast for here the feathering is of the same character as the feathering of the female.

Thus you will see that two exhibition birds mated together will not necessarily produce exhibition birds, though either may do so with a different mate. It is also apparent that a bird is not necessarily a good breeding bird because he is an exhibition bird for he may be lacking in the breeding necessary to provide a good inheritance for his chicks or he may have the ancestors but not the individual power of reproducing his characteristics. However, those who say that exhibition birds seldom make good breeding birds are going too far when speaking of Reds.

The ideal shade of red which breeders are working toward is a shade half way between the bird as light as he can be and still be an exhibition bird and the bird as dark as he can be and still be an exhibition bird but when choosing birds for the breeding pen we do not discard all birds which have not just this rich, bright, brilliant red which we interpret as ideal or Standard color, but we keep this ideal in mind and use in the breeding pen birds which produce others as near the Standard or ideal color as possible. This must be done not only

in breeding Reds but in breeding all buff and parti-colored birds and similar conditions exist even in the breeding of some white breeds. Therefore, this must not be considered a drawback in breeding Reds but merely a law which governs all breeding for color.

After discarding the birds of low vitality, poor type, small size and poor breeding color, your next step is to select your best breeding male bird. Do not look for a perfect bird for such a one does not exist either in your yards or mine or anyone's yard, but look for the best one you have. Remember when selecting him his undercolor is almost as important a point to consider as his surface color. You have seen writers who are authorities say that it is the surface color which is important but these writers are speaking from the standpoint of the judge rather than from the standpoint of the breeding. They are thinking of the exhibition rather than of the breeding bird. For when it comes to selecting birds which will produce others with a surface color as good as their own, the undercolor of these birds is almost as large a factor in the production of good surface color as the surface color itself. Thus in choosing your best male bird, you will choose your best surface colored bird taking all sections into consideration, providing he also has an undercolor of sufficient depth or richness to hold up the surface color and is comparatively free from faults. White is the greatest fault in a breeding bird and is found oftener in the undercolor. It may be caused by a bruise, by mites or lice or by poor condition from some other cause during the growth of the feather or feathers concerned. White coming from such causes is not a breeding defect but where it comes from lack of

proper breeding it should be considered a serious defect. One can always tell whether white is caused by lack of condition or whether it is bred in, by pulling out the white feathers when they become ripe and allowing them to grow in again under favorable conditions. Thus you should choose a dark, rich colored bird as free from white as possible and with the undercolor as rich as you can find it. You probably will not be able to find as rich a bird as you would like for Reds are not advanced as far towards the ideal in undercolor as in surface color but you should choose an undercolor that is really red, not buff.

Now there are certain sections of undercolor which seem to be the most important when choosing a breeding bird. Some call these sections the "governing" sections but I prefer to call them the "revealing" sections as they reveal to a great extent the strength of breeding color which the bird possesses or how good a color he is likely to produce in his chicks. These sections of undercolor are the undercolor of the hackle and the fluff. If the bird is strong in these sections and free from white, he will be likely to produce good color in his chicks, while if the color-producing quality of the bird is running out it will likely be revealed in these sections. Remember when looking at the undercolor of the hackle that the color well up on the neck will tell you as much about the bird's breeding quality as far as the hackle is concerned as the color at the base of the hackle. These sections are especially important when choosing old hens for the breeding pen as hens often lose so much of their color when they molt that it is hard to tell what their breeding color was but if they are still strong at the base of the feather, close to the skin, in

these sections of the undercolor, it is pretty safe to assume that they have a good deal of color-breeding strength.

There are also two sections of surface color which are more important than the others in a breeding bird. These are the breast and wing flights. Many do not understand what is good breeding color in a wing. I am not referring to the amount of black in this section but to the quality of the red color. This is more important in a breeding bird, whether male or female than having just the right amount of black in just the right place. Still more important is it for the breeding male bird to have a good breast. I consider this section of a breeding male bird more important even than the hackle because a weakness in hackle or in any other section can usually be offset in the females mated with the male bird but color weakness in the breast seems to be inherent in the female. You have probably noticed how many pullets have good breasts throughout their first and perhaps their second coat of chick feathers only to show a faded or mottled color in this section when they acquire their last coat, while a male bird showing a good breast as a chick always holds his color strength in this section. A female showing a strong breast color as a pullet, if she fades in any section as a hen, will fade in breast, while a male bird with a good breast as a cockerel will keep it as a cock bird. Thus if the male bird has not a good breast, he is not of much use in the breeding pen as it is very hard to overcome this fault by mating him with hens however good in this section. Good breast color should be as near the same shade as the back as possible and

should be smooth, soft, and free from shafting.

When it comes to the hackle section, however, we have an entirely different condition. The hackle section can be much improved by using females with dark hackles, as the tendency to fade in this section is not so inherent in the females as in the males. Undoubtedly all of you have hens in your yards that have faded out in every section but the hackle and male birds that have faded in no other section but the hackle. But remember we are speaking of a breeding and not an exhibition male bird. In choosing your best male bird, therefore, choose one strong in the breast and as good in the hackle as possible. You also want him to have as good head points as you can find and if he has also a red eye, so much the better. Remember, however, that eye color is almost the last point to consider in a breeding bird and is a section which will be easily corrected after you have bred into your birds other more important qualities. Also remember when considering a bird's comb that the texture and shape are more important than the number of points. And let me caution you also not to discard a bird because he has a slight amount of blue in wing bow or a little excess color on breast. These birds are often the strongest color breeders. We must be careful, however, to give them mates a little lacking in black points, mates with little or no smut in undercolor, no peppering or black on the wing bows, no black on breast and little or no ticking in hackle, and as little black as possible in the wing flights.

Let me warn you again you will not be able to find a bird for your breeding pens as good in every section as you would like to have him. Remember that we never

achieve the perfect but must always strive towards it. All we can do is use the best materials we have or can obtain and so gradually come a little nearer and a little nearer to our ideal or Standard bird. However, it is waste of time to work with materials too far below the level which has been reached by others. While we cannot find perfect breeding birds let us use the best we can find or afford and not be satisfied with less.

While I have told you as best I can what are the most desirable qualities and the most objectionable faults in a breeding bird, in the end you must be your own judge. You must be the one to say which bird has the best combination of good qualities as well as the fewest and least objectionable faults.

After selecting your best male bird, the next step is to select his mates. This is a matter of offsetting his defects and holding or enhancing his good qualities as much as possible in his mates. You have familiarized yourself as thoroughly as possible with all his good qualities and with all his defects. Now take him section by section and see what females you can find in your yards that are as good as he is in as many of his strong sections as possible and are strong in those sections where he is weak. If he is a little under size or a trifle short in back choose for his mates large hens with good long back. If he carries his tail a little high, mate with him females with low tail carriage. If he is a little light in hackle, give him mates as dark in hackle and as strong in undercolor of hackle as you can find. If he is not as strong in undercolor as you would like, give him females as strong in undercolor as you can find and do not discard them if they show

a little smut in undercolor or a bar of black across the middle of the under part of the feather as black is a color feeder. If, on the other hand, he is unusually strong in undercolor himself, still mate him with females strong in undercolor but without smut. If he shows black in hackle and is overloaded with black in wing, mate him with females showing as little black in hackle as possible. There is one point here against which I wish to warn you. There is a great danger, in trying to get rid of black in hackle, of letting the color of the hackle run out both on the surface and in the undercolor. A male bird with a good dark hackle showing a little black is much to be preferred to a male bird with a light hackle or a hackle showing white in the undercolor. Also keep in mind that many cockerels showing strong black in hackle as chicks will lose all or most of this when they get their adult feathers. If the male bird you are trying to mate is shy in black points, on the other hand, showing little or no black in the wings and no excess black anywhere, then choose for his mates females strong in black points, that is females with as much black in tail as possible, some black in wing flights, good strength of undercolor, and do not discard otherwise good mates because they show a little pepper or excess color on wing bows or breast unless you are fortunate enough to have enough females strong enough in every section to do without these. Just how much excess color should be introduced, and how often, you will have to judge for yourself. Some lines of Reds will stand more of this than others, because of the different breeding back of them. Some breeders claim they introduce excess color about every third year. I think the best plan is to use it whenever the undercolor is not as strong

as you would like in the mating you are putting together. But remember the tendency of red is to grow lighter with each generation and black used judiciously deepens the red. When choosing your birds for the breeding pen, do not forget to take brilliancy into consideration and remember also that shaftiness or a light streak of color following the quill of the feather betrays a color weakness. The redder the quill of your feather in every section the better. There is also the width of the feather in every section to be considered. A good wide feather shows vitality and also contributes to the smooth, neat appearance of the bird. You will, of course, have to sacrifice certain points; just which ones and how much will have to be left to your own judgment, for not matter how much theory you may learn you will find that you will need experience to bolster up your theory. Be sure, however, to hold as many of the birds' good points as you can. You will not get very far if you improve the length of the backs on your birds, one season, for instance, only to lose it the next. You must decide which qualities are most important to hold and which faults should be improved first. Remember, you must have breeding material for another season. Perhaps one mate will improve the neck color of the chicks and another the undercolor of the back and the fluff. Use both these hens and the next season you may be able to find birds from this mating with stronger color in fluff and another with stronger color in hackle than their sire. Thus gradually your line will be built up.

Keep strongly in mind when making up your matings the importance of the right blood, in other words the right ancestry for your birds. It is a law in breeding that all

birds and animals will show characteristics of ancestors many generations removed. This is the reason that all extreme and freak matings are to be so greatly deplored. From such matings you may get an occasional sensational bird but you are providing very bad ancestors for your future generations of chicks. If you breed always only from your best birds and keep breeding for the best quality you can produce in your flock as a whole, rather than for quality in a few individuals only, you will establish good blood lines and give the future generations of your line of birds sound ancestry that can be depended upon to produce good birds in large numbers.

This brings us to the subject of line breeding which is based on the laws of heredity and is merely an effort on the part of breeders to give the right ancestors to their birds or through a knowledge of the laws of heredity to fix certain qualities in their strain of birds. However, there is no charm or virtue in line breeding per se for it will fix faults just as surely and as firmly as it will fix virtues. Some people seem to think that all that is necessary in line breeding is to follow rigidly a chart made out by some authority on the subject. I cannot speak for other breeds but I know that anyone following such a chart literally in breeding Reds will have no good Reds left at the end of a few years. But if these charts are used as guides to steer us away from the evils of inbreeding, they are indeed valuable. If we follow line breeding, it necessarily follows that we must start with good birds or we will be fixing bad qualities

in our line instead of good ones. We cannot start out with poor birds and by following a chart produce still better birds. Unless we are very lucky we will have much worse birds than we started out with at the end of two generations. Thus you see line breeding has no charm in itself which will make your birds bloom into exhibition quality. While making use of the general laws of heredity to line breed or fix certain qualities in your line, you must also make use of the particular laws which govern the breeding of Rhode Island Reds.

Allied to this question is that of introducing new blood into your flock. We will say that your line is poor in breast color and try as you might you have not been able to improve them much in this respect. Your birds have not the blood back of them to give the inheritance of good blood to their chicks and to build up your line in this respect without introducing new blood would take too many years during which time you would be steadily losing money. The only way is to buy a bird from someone who has this quality bred into his flock, but do this carefully. Do not rashly distribute this blood through your whole flock as fast as you can. Introduce it into only a few birds at a time and gradually absorb this new blood in your line, being careful while introducing this new and desirable quality not to introduce also faults which you have spent many years eradicating.

If you have not the time, space, or patience to build up a line in this manner, your best plan is to get back to some re-

liable breeder each year for a male bird or a female to help you out on certain points. The reliable breeder who is winning at the best shows is constantly improving his flock and keeps far enough ahead of you so that he can supply you with the birds you need each season. He is spending time, money and thought to eradicate the faults you are trying to eradicate and in introducing the good points you wish to introduce and by buying from him, you will be able to save much time and labor. You will be able in one year to produce results which have cost him many years of patient labor. By sticking to the same breeder you keep the same blood lines without having the trouble and worry of line breeding for yourself.

Note—It is impossible to exhaust this subject in a booklet of this size but if anyone who reads this wishes to ask any questions on the subject of breeding Reds not answered here, if he will write me I will answer him to the best of my ability through the Rhode Island Red Journal.

My Method of Line Breeding Rhode Island Reds

By HAROLD TOMPKINS,
Concord, Mass.

The line breeding of Standard poultry is a subject that has often been written about, together with numerous charts which explain the different methods.

While I am not qualified to criticize in any way any of these methods of breeding (on account of not having tried them thoroughly) there is no doubt but what there are some good points derived from them, and some that are not so good when applied to the breeding of Rhode Island Reds.

As a benefit to the Rhode Island Red Club, its members and those who will eventually become such, I will endeavor in as plain a manner as possible to state the method that I have followed, in general, to make my flock carry as much reproducing power as possible and still retain the hardy and vigorous constitution as well as egg-laying qualities of their ancestors.

To begin with, I shall assume that I am a beginner just starting in to breed Reds.

First we secure some reliable breeder with a national reputation for line breeding and secure from him a pair, trio or pen of as good quality as we can afford, explaining to that breeder that we wish these mated for foundation breeding purposes, from which we wish to build a flock.

When the birds arrive we study them very carefully both individually and as a careful mating, learning what the weak

points may be and where the strength is to overcome the weakness that may be on the other side. If there is anything that we do not understand we will write to the breeder who furnished the stock, who will be more than willing to explain his reasons for such a mating.

We will breed them the first year the way they came, watching very carefully as to how the chicks appear from time to time (ever remembering that a Rhode Island Red chicken cannot tell you exactly what he is going to be until his last coat of feathers is on.)

At maturity we can see just how our original mating has produced and if the birds have been carefully mated for us, there should be some specimens that are better than any of the original mating, quite a goodly number as good and some few that will be ordinary specimens. These latter we discard and hold the others for future use.

For our second year's matings, we will select a few of the very best pullets to mate back to their father or what we shall call the original male, taking infinite pains to select only the very best specimens both as to Standard requirements as well as physical constitution. If our original hens have bred weaker than themselves on the average, then we select those that are stronger in all sections of color.

For our second mating this year we select the very best cockerel raised from the original mating to mate back to the original hens. We now select another good cockerel from the original pen to carry over as a spare male for use next season.

This will be Pen No. 2.

As before, watch the chickens from both

matings grow, their characteristics, etc., and when fully grown make a study of the flock as they run, to determine just what quality each mating has produced.

If mating No. 1 has produced as good or better than the birds that were in it, then these are the strongest in the original male's blood and, being of as good or better quality than what we had to start with, they are very valuable as breeders. These will be 75% of our original male's blood.

Now the chicks from No. 2 pen will be carefully studied to see whether the characteristics are as strong or stronger than the original mating, and the chances are bright for them to be much better, as the male was better than his father and having the same original hens, these should be strong breeders to carry on with. This of course depends on the prepotency of the male, and the prepotency means the ability of a bird to transmit his qualities to his offspring.

The chicks from No. 2 pen will be stronger bred in the female side.

We are now ready for real line breeding in numbers for we can mate some matings of close relationship and some more removed in relationship from which to carry on the line breeding the following season. Following is the list of matings which we can put together with the approximate blood of one or the other that they carry.

Pen No. 1. Original male mated to daughters of the No. 2 mating. In this the original male will be 100% of his own blood, while the females will carry 25% of the original male's blood and 75% of the original female's blood. In this mating the blood of the original male will be the stronger and is close enough breeding for all practical purposes.

Pen No. 2 will be our No. 2 male of last

year mated to daughters of the No. 1 male of the second year's breeding. This male will carry 50% of the original male's blood and 50% of the original female's blood while his males will carry 75% of the original male's blood and 25% of the original female's blood. This mating like No. 1 will carry a preponderance of the original male's blood.

Pen No. 3 will be headed by a son of our No. 2 male mated back to the original hens again, which will really be an outcross in the same line of blood so called, for only one of the original hens is his mother and the rest will be an outcross.

Pen No. 4. We will use here a son of the No. 2 male mated to daughters of the original male by the first year's breeding, using, if possible, the ones that were mated to the No. 1 male on the second year's breeding. The male here will be 75% original female's blood, and 25% original male's blood while his mates will be 50% of each original male and female. This mating will be stronger in the original female's blood.

Pen No. 5 will be headed by a son of No. 1 male (by second year's breeding) to daughters of No. 2 male. This will make a male with 75% of the old bird's blood and 25% of the original female's blood, mated to females that carry 75% original female's blood and 25% original male's blood. This mating is what will be called a balanced mating of blood lines, wherein the blood of our original male is just as strong as the blood of our original females and is an outcross in the same blood lines.

Pen No. 6. Will use in this pen a son of the No. 2 male to daughters of the No. 1 male (second year's breeding). This mating will have on the male side 75% original

female, and 25% original male while the females will carry 75% original male and 25% original females. Like mating No. 5 it is an outcross of the same blood lines.

Pen No. 7. For our final mating we use the male from the original mating that we have carried over from the first year's breeding and mate him to daughters of the original male (second year's breeding) and we then have another mating that carries a preponderance of the original male's blood as the male's is 50% each and the female's 75% old male and 25% original female.

This gives us pens Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 7 that are strongly bred stock, while matings Nos. 3, 5, and 6 are from what we shall get our new blood to carry on with and mate back to the offspring of pens Nos. 1, 2, 4, and 7, or vice versa so as to keep our pens related in the same blood lines, but still not breed too close.

Now it may be that we have not room for so many matings, and if this is the case we can dispose of either No. 1 or No. 2, whichever is the poorest mating, and we can eliminate either pen Nos. 3, 5, or 6 or two of them if we care to, and in case we eliminate two of them the one that would appeal to me the most to keep would be No. 5 as they are all young birds and capable of being bred for the greater length of time.

The same would apply to Nos. 1 and 2 for if we have been breeding some good stock from our original mating, then the birds in No. 2 will not only be younger stock, but better as well.

Now we raise chickens from all the pens that we care to breed from as equally divided as possible to give all the pens a chance to show what they are capable of

producing, as well as to get representative stock from each pen to carry on with.

Now for the fourth year's breeding, we have all sorts of combinations that we can put together, using sons of one mating to daughters of a male in another, always taking care that the blood lines are not too close, for, if each season's mating is set down in a book in black and white as to relative blood on each side and what percentages of blood are in each pen, then we can bring together close bred pens or outcross them in the same line of blood whichever we may wish to do. We have absolutely got to carry practically three lines to do this, as we have the birds that are stronger in the original male's blood and those that are stronger in the original female's blood together with some that are about equally divided in blood to get the new blood from each season.

You may readily see that if a man wished to use his original male onto his own daughters the first season and then onto his own daughters again the next season he would be eliminating all the original female's blood very fast, while on the other hand if he trapnested his original females and used a son of one of the hens back on his own mother, and then a son from this mating back onto the old hen again he would eliminate just as fast on the other side, and then would be getting an outcross when bringing the results of both ways of inbreeding together, but from my own experience I have found it better not to eliminate too much on either side, so have bred our original male to his own daughters only once, and not having trapnested the females we have used a cockerel back to the old hens twice.

As a word of advice, I would say that

each season after we have our pens mated, if we will take the time to go out to the pens with notebook and pencil, and jot down a short note as to the individual birds in the mating we may use this as reference for the following year when selecting birds for the next season's matings. For instance in pen No. 2 we have an elegant male as regards type, size, and general body color, but lacking a little in wing markings. We may have used females to him that are a little overstrong in markings so that it shows a little peppering on the wing bows. This is made note of, and then should we want to mate a cockerel from this mating, we know what to select and not get too strong in black for the following season. The same with use of smut, as an exhibition pullet that has been bred from a pullet that has been bred from a smut mating would want to be bred to an exhibition male rather than to a smutty male again as we would be overdoing things if we did. A certain amount of common sense must be used each season and if the little notebook is carefully kept each season, we can refer to it readily for what we may wish to know concerning the ancestry of certain birds.

If a breeder will carry this mating in the same general way year after year he cannot help but produce high grade Rhode Island Reds in goodly numbers. If he has started with moderately priced stock in the first place, he will need once in a while to secure a male of better quality from the same foundation to use in his matings, and as before stated, the breeder from whom he received his start can help him better in this than anyone else.

Should the beginner decide to start with hatching eggs instead of stock, then he should secure the best obtainable eggs from

a reliable breeder, and get them from a group of A No. 1 matings, then select the best specimen in a male and in the females and breed them together for the first season's breeding, and then proceed as mentioned above. If this is done, then a second male should be selected from the same lot of eggs to carry over for breeding the second year.

I have tried to make the above as clear as possible, without the use of highly technical phrases, so that each and all may understand it. There are some breeders who will not agree with me, who think different methods should be used, but I will state emphatically that my own flock of Reds has been bred along these same lines without impairing in any degree the health, vigor or egg production of my flock, and as this is the case, I feel that I might possibly be of some assistance to the novice who wishes to know a few points as to how to begin a linebred flock of Reds.

Trusting that I have helped some fellow Red lover on the way to success, I am

Faternally,

HAROLD TOMPKINS.

Judging Rhode Island Reds

By W. H. CARD, Manchester, Ct.

The principle of judging applies to any and all breeds alike, so far as considering the Standard scale of points is concerned. In fact, the Standard scale of points is the basis for all judgments by which a judge considers the different sections as major and minor points, according to their value in the aforesaid scale of points. For instance, the scale of points shows that 75% of a fowl, especially a Rhode Island Red, belongs to the shape and surface color alone. Naturally this would designate them as the major sections or major points of a R. I. Red, leaving the head points, legs and feet and under-color as the minor sections or points to be considered, waving aside the scale of points so as to consider this from another angle. Our common sense teaches us that the surface color and type are major points to be considered because the first sight that we have of a R. I. Red is its type and its surface color, no matter whether in the poultry yard, on the farm, or in the exhibition coop.

The first points we see are these two; type and surface color, and tells even the observer, whether a novice or an expert, that the bird is a representative of the breed. Thus it is that our common sense deductions coincide exactly with the scale of points in the Standard. Going further into this idea of common sense deductions we cannot know the real worth of the specimen until it is in our hands and the head points, legs and toes and under-color examined and

considered. Our common sense further teaches us that when two specimens are placed side by side, they are to all appearances exactly alike in type and color which are considered major points; that the minor points then must determine which is the superior bird. Naturally, the greater of the minor sections is under-color. Of these two specimens we may find that one has smut or black in the under-color and the other free from this trouble. Everything being equal, even a novice knows that the last mentioned is the winner. Of course, there are but few instances of comparison as easy as this for solution, nevertheless, it will give my readers a key to the general situation in judging Reds.

Coming back to the order of natural things which affect and control one's judgment, I would say at this point that there will be no attempt to define any exact shade of red which may be termed as the correct R. I. Red color, but every effort will be made to define and impress upon all of my readers the great value of evenness of color from head to tail on both male and female R. I. Reds. Therefore, specimens may be of different shades of red from bright bay to dark cherry, etc., and yet conform to the reading of the Standard, if of an even shade of red from head to tail.

It is a well-known fact that the beginner with R. I. Reds, naturally, tries to grasp the idea of one certain fixed shade of red for the breed and even many old breeders make this same mistake and in searching for this fixed shade of red, they miss the main point of the Standard, which calls for harmonious blending of all sections, in other words, an even surface color from head to tail. The shade of red which the majority prefer is

what we may call a rich, brilliant, cherry red and this is the shade upon which the novices and others make their mistake because this rich, brilliant, cherry red is seldom found complete from head to tail on a R. I. Red of either sex. When such a bird is found of an even cherry red from head to tail with sound under-color, etc., it is the real bird of a Red breeder's desire and their scarcity is the reason for their value. Nevertheless, there are other shades of red just as brilliant but darker and they are more common because they are generally of an even blend of color from head to tail, whereas the cherry red bird is more often uneven in surface color, neck being a shade or so lighter and shoulders a trifle darker. But, the beginner or novice does not sense these differences properly and imagines that this is the bird regardless of the uneven shades because he sees only the shade which he thinks is the correct R. I. Red color. In comparing specimens in judging, type is just as important as color.

Some writers claim that the literal reading of the Standard must be applied to R. I. Reds, that shape makes the breed and color the variety, but not in R. I. Reds. There is no variety-color, therefore color is on an even plane with type in R. I. Reds. The main factors must be considered in favor of color over shape which is the fact that shape is definite and color is not, because shape can be followed by each line in all sections and can be easily sketched by any observer, whereas color is subject to different lights and with R. I. Reds subject also to different shades. Further than that, shape is one of the natural characteristics of the R. I. Red and has always been with the breed whereas Standard color is a bred-on requisite which

has required at least 25 years to bring to its present high quality.

Therefore, in judging a class of R. I. Reds the first thing a judge should do is to go through his class from the first coop to the end of the line and consider the type of each individual making notes of same without handling the birds. This should be done at the beginning of the judging because after a judge has handled a specimen they are not so apt to get back into their natural

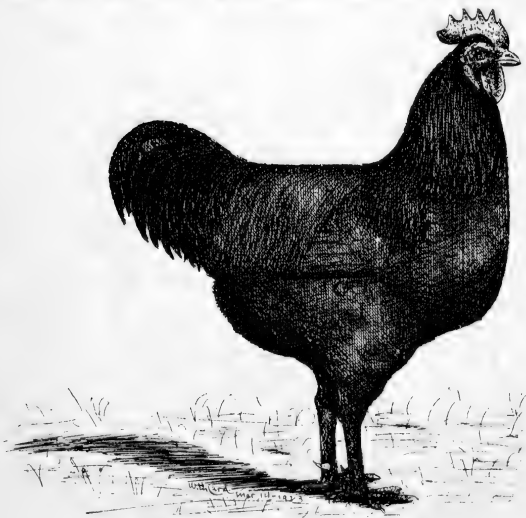


ILLUSTRATION OF IDEAL S. C. RED

This fine sketch of the ideal S. C. Rhode Island Red male is the result of many months of work by Mr. Lester Tompkins as critic and Mr. W. H. Card as artist. It represents not only artistic skill, but also more real patience and more knowledge, love and study of the Rhode Island Red than anyone but the two men responsible for this picture can realize. The club owes a debt of gratitude to these gentlemen and to the other judges and breeders of Reds who made helpful suggestions while the sketch was in progress.—Mrs. E. W. Mahood, President Rhode Island Red Club of America.

form or type, therefore it is expedient that they be judged for type before handling.

Personally, I am a greater believer in the word comparison in the true and literal sense in that every specimen should be compared with every other specimen in the class to find the differences in the shade and evenness of surface color as well as the defects and quality of the under-color considering the head points as the last and most inconsequential sections of the bird. Head points such as comb and eyes are in the scale of points, not more than 1-10 of the whole scale of points which places them among the minor sections of the minor points, therefore as I have said before to be the last thing considered. No judge can tell the color quality of one specimen over another by carrying in his mind the color from one cage to another from 5 to 50 feet distant. To get the exact comparison between the two the two birds must be placed side by side in a natural light where the brilliancy of their plumage does not cause changeable hues in the color. In such a natural light a judge can get the correct idea of the under-color as well as the surface and discover all defects if any in the bird. Any judge who has practiced this has discovered that one bird is a foil for the other in that all defects are brought out more vivid when two birds are together than if a judge handles them separately. My method in judging, which has been uniformly successful in that the majority seems satisfied has been to take specimen in coop No. 1 and compare him with specimen in coop No. 2 finding all the defects in both birds and adding my estimate of type and then determine which is the better, coop 1 or coop 2. If it should be that coop 2 is

the better bird I put coop 1 back again and compare coop 3 with coop 2. I may find that coop 2 is better than coop 3 yet always taking notes in a book of the quality of coop 2 and coop 1 and coop 3 and so on through the class so that when I have finished I know the defects in every bird. Now coop 2 has perhaps proven better than all the coops up to coop 25. Here I find a specimen that is superior by actual comparison to coop 2. Then I make notes in my book that coop 25 is the first bird so far, naturally coop 2 is the second bird up to this time, and I place coop 2 back in his cage and carry coop 25 as the bird to be compared further up the line. When I arrive at coop 42 I may find here a bird that is superior to coop 25, naturally we know that he is also superior to coop 2. This makes coop 42 first, coop 25 second and coop 2 third. Then we go on with the bird from coop 42 as our bird to be compared further up the line. We arrive at coop 60 and we find here a bird superior to coop 42. This naturally places 60 first, 42 second, 25 third and 2 fourth. We go no further than coop 61 when we find here a better specimen than 60 and our awards now read 61 first, 60 second, 42 third, 25 fourth and 2 fifth, as the fifth prize is the limit for instance, up to this time we have our five prizes awarded. Yet, there being perhaps 75 birds in the class, we must go on with 61 and when we arrive at 71 we find here a specimen better than 61 and 71 proves superior to the rest of the class therefore, our work is done and the bird in cage number 2 being the poorest one of the six selected, is not to be any longer considered as in the ribbons which makes our final summing up as follows: 71 first, 61 second, 60 third, 42 fourth and 25 fifth. You will observe by the above

that you do not have to compare the birds of the lower ribbons with those that are above for the very evident fact for instance, if 60 was superior to 25 and 42 that naturally 61 and 71 would be superior because these birds won over number 60.

Now the above example has only explained the method but not the reasons why they were placed as they are. Therefore, we will endeavor to give the reasons; Number 71 represents one even shade of red from head to tail with an undercolor of the richest hue almost matching the surface; the eye is Standard color and the comb has five points and the type is of that perfect oblong which is the natural shape of the breed. Number 61 had all of these requisites except a slight difference in shade in the fluff and stern of the bird. Number 60 was of an even shade from head to tail lacking sufficient black in wings, and hackle a trifle shaded. 42 appeared very even in surface color with type of back a trifle on the concave order and under-color not as rich as desired. 25 shows a bird of what we may call the blanket type which means that hackle, back and saddle and wing bows are of one even shade, but breast and lower body much lighter in red shade. Really a handsome appearing bird but defective in important major sections, important because the breast and lower body are always the indexes of the breeding ability of red. Number 2 which was not placed, was a good deal like 25 in surface color, but had smut bars across the back in undercolor. I do not wish my readers to understand that smut is such a terrible defect. It is only in this instance set back because everything else was equal in the other sections. There may be instances where a bird with smut

in the under-color would be even a winner of first prize if the surface color was an even shade and rich and brilliant and the only defect would be a few bars of smut in the under-color. Such a specimen in competing against birds with uneven surface would be an easy winner for the very good reason they will know by the above that a judge places the ribbons on those birds with the least defects. I write this at this point because in my experience I have noticed that many exhibitors are not only careless about their selections but endeavor to make a big exhibit of their stock even with mediocre birds when it should be the aim and ambition of every exhibitor to only place the best quality on exhibition and that it is not numbers that count so much as the quality of the stock. An exhibitor showing but one specimen that wins a blue ribbon gains a far greater advertisement for his stock than an exhibitor who shows 40 birds and does not win a blue ribbon. Therefore to be able to enter a show room as a strong competitor it is expedient that the breeder knows how to select his birds by the same manner of judging them in his own yards as the judge would employ in the show room.

In the foregoing I have made no mention of white in the under-color and flights of R. I. Reds. Suffice to say that any breeder of R. I. Reds today knows full well that white is the BANE of the R. I. Red color and no specimen stands a ghost of a show that contains white in its under-color, flights or main tail no matter how even its surface or how true its type. It's the wise exhibitor who leaves such birds at home except the one little section which is much exaggerated in importance and that is the white over

the kidneys. Considering it from a logical and common sense standpoint, white over the kidneys is not a real defect, but comes only from some little ailment which disturbed the action of the kidneys and produced a feverish condition of them which in turn draws the pigment from the three or four feathers over the kidneys and if these three or four feathers are pulled out, they always come back with the natural red under-color; whereas, if it was a real defect of breeding, no matter how often they were pulled out they would still come back white. But where white is found in the hackle or at base of tail it is a serious defect and will carry on in the breeding yards, therefore my advice to any exhibitor is to leave such birds at home. In the final round-up put them on the butcher's bench before the breeding season.

In a short thesis like this it is impossible to cover every point. We can only give hints and suggestions. Among them is this—in judging your birds consider their stamina and vigor, the breadth across the hips and depth of abdomen and all those vital points which stand for their utility qualifications. In close judging they must be considered by every up-to-date judge because the one great factor that makes the R. I. Red popular today is its splendid utility qualifications, both in the production of flesh and eggs, therefore in judging, these factors which stand for these qualities must be considered as well as the surface color, type, head points and under-color. There is no need to speak of the disqualifications particularly. The Standard tells what they are and any specimen having a disqualification is out of the race and not further considered even in the awarding of specials.

The main thought we are trying to bring to the attention of our readers is that a R. I. Red to be of high class, must be of an even shade of rich, brilliant red from head to tail with tail a rich black, over-casted with a greenish sheen, a five point comb and rich strong red under-color in every section; all this on a body of oblong proportion like unto a brick set on edge, with legs exactly in the middle to hold that horizontal position of the back line. Any exhibitor who selects his birds according to the foregoing suggestions and hints will be certain to place a string of Rhode Island Reds in any show, worthy of consideration by any well qualified Rhode Island Red judge and a string that will give his competitors a race worth while, in any show that he sees fit to enter.

Read the above over carefully not only once, but seven times seven until every thought is properly considered. This advice applies not only to breeders and exhibitors, but to would-be judges of R. I. Reds that we may all consider our show specimens on the same basis of judgment.

Yours fraternally,

W. H. CARD.

Judging Rhode Island Reds

By JUDGE J. C. JOHNSTON

If I were called upon to name the three most essential things in judging Rhode Island Reds, I would say, a complete knowledge of the breed, integrity, and "Back Bone." Lacking any one of these requirements no living man can place the awards

[Thirty-three]

on a class of Reds such as are shown today and do justice to himself and to the exhibitors. You ask why I name these essentials, and in the order named. The first enables the judge to determine absolutely which is the better specimen. By having full and absolute possession of the second essential he is able to make this decision without being influenced in the least by the display of advertising matter on the coops or the "meaning glances" of the exhibitors about him. The third is the power by which he is enabled to carry out the dictates of his conscience "without fear and without favor." The lack of this very important essential has meant the down-fall of many judges who, had they possessed it might today have been on the very top of the ladder of fame.

The Standard of Perfection, published and given to us as a guide by which all Standard fowls are to be judged, should be the undisputed guide of the Rhode Island Red judge. It is very true that some descriptive points may not be perfectly clear to the average judge or breeder, which gives him the opportunity to "press his hobby" and to criticize the Standard of Perfection. It is next to impossible for two men to put the same construction upon an article. Learned men, graduates of the best law school of the world, do not agree on points of law, yet they have their statutes by which all points are governed and in accordance with which all decisions are made. The Standard of Perfection is the statutes laid down to us by the A. P. A., the Blackstone of the poultry world, under whose jurisdiction our poultry shows are held, and by whose authority men are licensed to judge poultry.

The greatest differences in opinion seem to be in color. Judges agree pretty gener-

ally as to type, however. There is either a vast difference in the construction put upon the Standard description of color, or a lot of personal likes and dislikes enter into the placing of awards. One judge may like extremely light color, another a dark chocolate (and there seems to be a great many of the latter) yet neither has a right (under the statutes) to prefer his choice of color to that of the Standard description of Red. Let us dig into the color proposition, with Webster's Unabridged Dictionary in support of our efforts, and see if this question of color cannot be made clean to all who may read. Webster defines Red as a fundamental color, appearing at the lower end of the visible spectrum. Spectrum is defined as an image formed when a beam of light is dispersed so that its rays are arranged in the order of their wave lengths, as in a Rainbow. Rich is defined by Webster as abounding in material possessions, abundant, copious. Brilliant is defined as sparkling, very bright, shining. Gloss is defined as luster, polish, to give luster or gloss, glaze, color.

Now with these definitions before us, by authority that is beyond dispute, let us see what the "statutes" say in regard to the color of Rhode Island Reds.

On page 103 of the 1915 edition of the Standard of Perfection, you will find under general description of surface color of male, plumage: general surface, rich, brilliant, red, except where black is specified, free from shafting or mealy appearance, the less contrast there is between wing-bows, back, hackle, and breast the better; a harmonious blending in all sections is desired, the specimen should be so brilliant in color as to have

a glossed appearance, under-color of all sections Red. After reading and carefully analyzing this section in connection with the general description given on the same page, we fail to find wherein the framers of the Standard made any grievous error, the words "rich" and "brilliant" are used at every opportunity, to impress upon the reader the fact that the Red must possess "abundance of color," while it must also be brilliant and glossy. It is the writer's firm opinion that the intention and purpose of the Standard, while it does not so state, was to define a color of Red possessing all the richness and brilliancy possible to be contained in **red color** and be free from any chocolate things. All breeders know that this is the hardest color to produce and in all walks of life the thing hardest to obtain is the thing most highly prized. Referring back to the Standard description of color, **not one single word** in the entire description of either male or female can be construed to mean that the color should be anything but rich, brilliant red.

There are a great many points that might be mentioned in connection with this article, such as methods of handling, checking up, the kind of light under which best results are obtained, etc., etc.

In handling a class of Reds one should be deliberate in his work. Never approach a coop hastily or handle a specimen roughly. A Red once frightened will not, in a great many cases, show his true form during the entire show. We find that a good system, one which we have used for a number of years in checking up, is to first give the class the "once over." This is done to "get acquainted" with the birds and to show them that you mean them no harm. Do not touch

a bird in the class until you have passed through the aisle at least two or three times. After having done this proceed to handle carefully, each and every specimen in the class, checking them up for type and color, either by check marks or by position of cards on the coops. Where this is done properly you have your best birds located on the first round. Look these over again, carefully studying their type until you have located the one best in this respect. Then determine which is second, third, fourth, etc., on down to the limit of ribbons to be placed. When this has been done the birds should be compared in the open day light if possible, to ascertain which is best color, second best and so on down the line. In my opinion this is the only way in which a judge can be sure that his awards are correct, as the light in most show rooms is very deceptive and has caused more than one judge to blunder. After you have followed this course through a few shows you will appreciate just how ridiculous and unjust are the criticisms of those who judge the classes from the aisle.

- In judging pens the male is of course half the pen. Individual quality should be first consideration, while the matching, or blending of type and color in the male and females, should be overlooked. This not only "brings out" and strengthens the quality of each individual, but adds greatly to the merit of the pen as a whole.

"HOBBIES"

If you are judging Reds and are afflicted with the "Hobby" habit, for the sake of the future of this grand breed of poultry, take something for it, we suggest an indefinite vacation. This "Hobby" judging has in our opinion done more to retard the advancement of Reds than all other evils combined.

When this ailment attacks a person it seems to befuddle the mind and through the fog he sees only the "Hobby." In the Rhode Island Reds it may be one or more of several different things. However, the most prevalent cases seem to be five-point combs, red eyes, smooth, even surface of any old color, and last but not least "slip wings" and in the eyes of many any wing that does not "snap up like a jack knife" is a slip wing, and the owner must go into the discard.

Smut, yes smut is the "bug bear," a faint trace of which has wrecked the hopes and aspirations of more than one noble specimen, and caused him to lay down the laurels to a "pumpkin-necked" competitor that was not worth the entry fee. We have seen a five-point comb surmounting a sneaky-headed, slab-sided, high-tailed, knock-kneed, ill-shaped thing that resembled a Red only in color, placed over a competitor that was far superior in every respect excepting in comb. We have seen cases equally as ridiculous applied to the other "hobbies" mentioned above. Now don't get the idea that we are against five-point combs, red eyes, and even surface color, and in favor of smut. No one admires the first named three more than does the writer. These are not only desirable but are demanded in the Standard Red. The thing that we want to press home is, the ridiculousness of this "Hobby Judging." When we hang a ribbon on a five-pointed comb we want the specimen wearing it to be the equal in other sections of his nearest competitor who is more unfortunate in this section.

When we place the blue on a pair of red eyes, we want these eyes to be the windows through which the best bird in the class, all sections considered, looks out on his fellow

competitors. When we place it on even surface color, we want this color RED and a chicken red to the skin inside of it, and when we turn a specimen down because of a "trace of smut" it is because his competitor is his equal, all other things considered, and is free from this defect. These remarks are not made for the purpose of casting reflections, but to emphasize the necessity of thoroughly considering and weighing carefully all the points of each and every section before making a decision.

TYPE MUST NOT BE OVERLOOKED

The old saying that type makes the breed, is nowhere more in evidence than in Rhode Island Reds. Their long, graceful, well poised body, is nowhere approached by any other breed of fowls. It is this type that has added so materially to the rapid advancement of the Reds and combined with the beautiful brilliant red and black combination of colors, has enabled them to outdistance all competitors and gain a position far in advance in the line of popular favor. Let us put forth every effort in making awards to maintain and improve this fowl of beauty. Let us ever keep in our mind's eye this long, graceful body, with tail carried low and head well poised and slightly forward, a back that is of almost equal width the entire length, carried horizontally and over an under-line that is of equal length and parallel to the back. This body clothed in a smooth close-fitting coat of rich, brilliant Red color as defined in the Standard, and balanced on a pair of well shaped legs of medium length is the ideal fanciers' fowl of today.



